

OTOLITH COLLECTION PROCESS

standard edible portions of Michigan's sport and commercial fishes.

Listed below are the "standard edible portions" for Michigan fishes. The "standard edible portion" will be used for preparing fish for contaminant analysis. The "standard edible portion" is that portion of the listed species

Remove gills and scrape away the soft tissues at the base of the brain.

Locate knife across pseudobranchs inside the gill covers, slightly posterior to the point of the arrow-shaped bony structure (prootic bone) at the base of the brain cavity where the vertebral column begins (exposed portion of prootic bone).

Apply enough pressure on the knife to sever midway through pair of bulla in the prootic bone taking care not to cut all the way through the cavities containing the two otoliths. Break the prootic bulla bone open as you would a single shot shotgun, being careful not to tear the fish in half. Each of the otoliths should now be readily observable nestled in its cavity. If the lake trout was subdued with too much zeal (clubbed too hard), the contents of the cavities may be bloody, making otoliths nearly impossible to locate. The moral of this is, use just enough force to subdue the fish.

Pick each otolith out with a pair of forceps and put them on the back of your fillet gloved hand. Tease all the soft tissues of the sacculus away from the otoliths until they are stripped clean of any membranes. Now pick them off the glove and place them in a scale sample envelope for storage.

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3/93